

May 23, 2023

Library Director lobbies board members to KEEP explicit book in the library

- Jan 9 2023: Jan Love submits Book Reconsideration for *Out of Darkness*
- May 23 2023: The Librarian went out of her way to convince the library board to vote to keep this book right where it is. She took the time to obtain a letter from the author and send it to the Library Board. The letter included pages of the author's self-aggrandizing praise about her own work... *Perhaps this librarian believes that without her divine intervention the library board can't make their own decision.*
- Jun 21, 2023: This book turned out to be the only one that the board actually voted to put into the Adult Section. However, the Book's sound recording (books on tape) remained in the Young Adult section and is still there as of Oct. 9, 2025.
- Oct 8, 2025: A concerned patron sent documentation and an email to all the City Council members and mayor asking the sound recording to be removed.



D <nativetexandee@gmail.com>

Fw: Out of Darkness - Book in Tyler Library

1 message

Jan Love <jan@janlove.com>

To: "shene@tylertexas.com" <shene@tylertexas.com>

Mon, Jan 9, 2023 at 2:47 PM

Mr. Hene,

I have been going to the Tyler Public Library board meetings for over a year.

We have requested some simple changes to the content of the children and young adult section of the library (Young adult meaning children as young as 12 years!).

Based on what I have heard being read aloud during our June 2021 board meeting along the pictures included in the book, I decided to look into this issue myself.

If you are not already aware of vulgar and sexually explicit content at the Tyler Public Library, please make sure you read just one example attached (Out Of Darkness).

The example attached is *nothing* compared to many books in available to minors in our library that are even worse.

Would you please attend the next board meeting Wednesday, Feb. 22 at 4:30 at the Tyler Public Library.

Thanks,

Jan Love, REALTOR

CRS, GRI, ABR, SRES, ALHS

RE/MAX Hall of Fame

RE/MAX Tyler

903-780-8353 (cell)

www.JanLove.com

From: Jan Love

Sent: Monday, January 9, 2023 2:29 PM

To: ataylor@tylertexas.com <ataylor@tylertexas.com>

Subject: Out of Darkness

Please see the attached form.

Thanks,

Jan Love, REALTOR

CRS, GRI, ABR, SRES, ALHS

RE/MAX Hall of Fame

RE/MAX Tyler

903-780-8353 (cell)

www.JanLove.com



Reconsideration Form Tyler Public Library OUR OF DARKNESS 01092023.docx

36K

Re: Book Reconsideration

1 message

Ashley Taylor <ataylor@tylertexas.com>

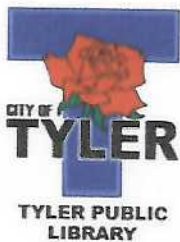
To: Jan Love <jan@janlove.com>, Stephanie Franklin <sfranklin@tylertexas.com>, "bookwormlsu@gmail.com" <bookwormlsu@gmail.com>, Sheila Austin <sjaustin64@gmail.com>, Dee Chambless <nativetexandee@gmail.com> Mon, Apr 17, 2023 at 10:30 AM

Dear Ms. Jan Love,

Your request for an appeal has been received. I will forward your request to all members of the Board. They will review your request and have a response within 90 days as outlined within the [Collection Development policy](#).

I will contact you as to when your appeal may be on an agenda. At that time you will be given time to speak directly to the board to make your appeal.

Thank you,

*Ashley Taylor*City Librarian / Library Director
City of TylerTyler Public Library
201 S. College Ave.
Tyler, TX 75702
903-593-READ (7323)ataylor@tylertexas.com | www.TylerLibrary.com**From:** Jan Love <jan@janlove.com>**Sent:** Friday, April 14, 2023 1:37 PM**To:** Ashley Taylor <ataylor@tylertexas.com>; Alesha Buckner <abuckner@tylertexas.com>; Stephanie Franklin <sfranklin@tylertexas.com>; sjaustin64@tylertexas.com <sjaustin64@tylertexas.com>; bookwormlsu@gmail.com <bookwormlsu@gmail.com>; Dee Chambless <nativetexandee@gmail.com>**Subject:** Book Reconsideration

Hello,

I would like the board to evaluate my book reconsideration for "Out Of Darkness" at this month's library board meeting. My request was to simply move this book to the Adult section. This request was denied and I would like appeal to the board.

Thank you.

Thanks,
Jan Love, REALTOR
CRS, GRI, ABR, SRES, ALHS
RE/MAX Hall of Fame
RE/MAX Tyler
903-780-8353 (cell)
www.JanLove.com

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. [Do not click links](#) or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Letter from an Author

1 message

Ashley Taylor <ataylor@tylertexas.com>

To: "bookworm!su@gmail.com" <bookworm!su@gmail.com>, "glenda.malone@southside.com" <glenda.malone@southside.com>, "kmthompson2019@gmail.com" <kmthompson2019@gmail.com>, "nativetexandee@gmail.com" <nativetexandee@gmail.com>, Sheila Austin <sjaustin64@gmail.com>, "Tamaraebrooks@gmail.com" <Tamaraebrooks@gmail.com>, Toni Ferrell <tonief4@gmail.com>

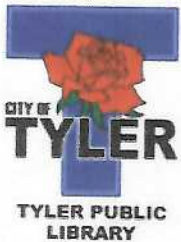
Tue, May 23, 2023 at 10:12 AM

Good Morning,

I wanted to remind everyone of the Friends "ribbon" cutting of the Local History room updates. I look forward to seeing all who have already RSVP'd. I also wanted to share with you a letter from Ashley Hope Perez, author of Out of Darkness.

Out of Darkness is one that was recently appealed to the Board and will be on our June agenda. Please see her attached letter.

Best Regards,

*Ashley Taylor*

City Librarian / Library Director
City of Tyler

Tyler Public Library
201 S. College Ave.

Tyler, TX 75702
903-593-READ (7323)

ataylor@tylertexas.com | www.TylerLibrary.com

 LIBRARIANS FIGHTING CHALLENGE TO OUT OF DARKNESS.pdf
760K

librarian lobbying
board members
to keep explicit
book in
teen section

STATEMENT FOR TYLER, TEXAS:

[This message is from Ashley Pérez, the author of the novel OUT OF DARKNESS.]

Dear Tyler readers and leaders,

My name is Ashley Hope Pérez, and I am the author of OUT OF DARKNESS. I am also a real person—a Texan, a mom, a literature professor, and a former Texas high school English teacher with a heart for serving students.

Because literature engages with the world and the world is often an ugly place, passages from virtually any book can be made to sound “inappropriate” when pulled out of context or described in sensational terms.

What if I told you about a book with many pages of erotic poetry, a book with graphic descriptions of male genitalia, a book where a father consents to his daughter being gang raped while he enjoys an evening with guests?

All of these descriptions of the Bible are factually true, but they are also incomplete and misleading, and they do not do justice to the Bible’s complexity or value. In the same way, recent challenges to my book and others have ignored the intentions of each book as a whole, and the messages of hope, moral courage, and connection that accompany the hard realities we examine.

OUT OF DARKNESS takes place in 1937 and sheds light on an important but little-known event in East Texas history, the New London school explosion. It invites readers to engage with the hardships other Texans have faced. It depicts young people struggling for dignity, joy, and respect in a difficult time. After all, 1937 was a time in Texas history when segregation, terrorization, & lynchings were part of non-White Americans’ daily experience. Boys did sometimes speak crudely about women—especially women of color. Black Americans faced harsh discrimination and exclusion from opportunities, as was the case in New London, where Black kids could not attend the New London School.

I write about those historical realities to show the depths of harm they caused. I portray friendship, loving family, community, & healthy relationships because they, too, are part of my characters’ world.

I wrote OUT OF DARKNESS because I believe that silence about painful issues causes harm. This was true for the survivors of the explosion, many of whom suffered in silence for decades before coming together to talk about their experiences. It is also true for women who experience sexual assault, like the main character in the novel.

I wrote OUT OF DARKNESS to put the focus, for once, on the story of those who are often pushed to the edges of our history books, like the students I taught in Texas and their families.

I wrote it to show that drawing beauty out of suffering is one way we transform our world.

The book removal efforts of the last few years criticize books like mine for doing what literature does: exploring the whole range of human experience and inviting readers to imagine the humanity of people different from themselves. Sometimes that means going to painful places. Parents and teens need to have choices about what they read. We each exercise discretion by what we choose to read or not read. That is where parental discretion and discernment is exercised. But please do not let a handful of folks limit access to a work of literature because they dislike it. This interferes with a core function of libraries, which is to create a space for choice and exploration.

Instead, leaders can respond to sincere community concerns about what their kids and teens are reading without disrupting other students’ learning or access to books. There are many excellent resources that

help adults talk with their young people about what they're reading, so that books become an opportunity for sharing values and talking about difficult situations.

Certainly OUT OF DARKNESS isn't for everyone—no book is. But OUT OF DARKNESS speaks in a unique way to experiences in East Texas history. I know that is a book that matters to someone in your community because I hear from readers all the time about how the story matters to them. (Please see below.) For someone, it is the book that makes history come to life and inspires deepened care and engagement in community. That reader deserves to be able to find it in your library's teen collection.

Sincerely,
Ashley Hope Pérez

Dear Ashley Hope Pérez,

My wife's father, my father in law was present in the New London explosion of March 17, 1937. He was 15 years old at the time of the explosion. He was not severely injured and was able to climb out of a classroom window. He had 4 other siblings and all survived. One sister was sent to the office for some task at the time of the explosion. Everyone in her classroom died.

My wife's father, Joe, was a Pan Am captain and his older brother was a 4 star general in the Air Force. The other 3 siblings all lived productive lives but all have passed away at this point. Joe wrote an autobiography of his life with a many page long recount of the school disaster. The fact he was 15 and half years old, Boy Scout and only minor injuries he spent time searching for survivors and collecting the dead.

My wife and I were listening to NPR and heard a review of your book. New London school disaster was mentioned and that your book was blacklisted in some parts of the country. We each said we MUST read your book. Joe's father worked in the oil fields, drank frequently, had some family connections to the KKK. Racism was certainly commonplace but the Joe and his siblings seemed to be able to escape those beliefs.

Your book was hard to read at times but I know our country struggled with equality for all races... and still does. We need to accept we have failed as a nation much of our existence but if we hope to improve we must come to terms with those short comings.

Thanks for your book

Sent from my iPhone

Here's the review I just left: "Reality can be disturbing. Heavy. Traumatic. But one of the purposes of art is to show us reality - the beautiful and the ugly. The best art brings together our intellect and our feelings, so that we don't just view reality dispassionately, we feel it. Powerful fiction gives us the opportunity to not just learn about experiences not our own, but in some way, to feel we are experiencing them, too.

Out of Darkness gives us that, which is perhaps why it upsets some people. We don't want to know harsh truths about the racism in our history, and we certainly don't want to have to feel we are experiencing it! The author doesn't just give us a window to peek into another world, she allows us to be inside different characters, feeling their joy, their hopes, their fears. I am all churned up. This is what good literature does to a person.

I'll be sharing this book with my young adult children. They are 8th generation white Texans, and their grandfather grew up in East Texas at the time of this story. It is good for them to be churned up, too, to imagine stories outside the ones they have grown up hearing. To understand that reality is not limited to their own experience."

I just finished your book *Out of Darkness*. The second I finished, I looked up your social media. I felt the urge to let you know how much your work moved me. You managed to write a story so full of love, loss, pain, fear and strength. You wrote a historical novel about dark sides of American history - and still we should not forget that parentification, racism, sexual abuse of minors still happen today. It is so important to open our hearts and minds to these topics. Through your words could feel on my skin how helpless, powerless and lost your children protagonists felt at the mercy of adults and of the events. The awareness of this pain can help us understand, change and help.

I was so shocked to read about the negative reactions and book bannings. Even more shocked to read about the hate letters you received. The people writing these remind me of the angry mob at the end of your book. These letters are not justifiable.

Still, I cannot keep thinking: what did they lose, what do they fear to be so angry and scared? Or do they fear your book because they feel guilty and caught when they read about racism (if they read the book at all?).

I am a psychotherapist. You surely already know, but from my point of view your book is not a threat but precious for every teenager that will have the occasion to read. It may and will be very painful. But many life lessons are. Thank you to writers and artists that help us express and process our emotions with their work.

I will not comment on the nonsense of the book being pornography. I just must lough over the thought that every teenager out there knows where and how to find true pornography. And these angry parents and grand parents move mountains to ban a book because their children could read "pornhole". Oh boy.

Thank you for this powerful story, it is a true gift. I imagine how tiring the debates and letters must be for you. Please do not give up.



So, I stayed up late finishing this book... I am still struggling with the words that I need to process it. It is by far one of the most haunting, gripping, heartbreaking, thought-provoking books I've ever read. My heart ❤️ was beating with Naomi, Wash, Beto, and Cari.

Set against the true events of the New London school explosion, the air of tragedy looms throughout the pages as we experience the pure love growing between Naomi, Wash, and the twins.

I don't think I've cried this hard from a book in a long time, and I can say that it will stay with me forever.

5 stars....one of the best books I've read.

Hi!! I wanted to apologize for being digitally challenged! Since I can't seem to locate it, I'm guessing the Google meet invite didn't work? 🙄

Just finishing Out of Darkness tonight for our book group tomorrow. I honestly have to say that I am an emotional wreck the closer I get to the ending. This is definitely one of the more powerful books that I have read in a long time. I can't wait to dive into it with my book group tomorrow night! I have to get myself prepared tomorrow!

On the off chance that you still might be available, I am going to send a zoom link. I know how to work this better!

Thank you for sharing this story with the world. I know that it will stay with me for a long time!



8/31/22, 10:45 PM

8/3/22, 11:14 PM

Hi Ashley,

This is Justin Huse, a mortgage lender who originally wanted to teach but was quickly discouraged.

I am reading your book now, and only after I watched a video of that fool woman in Lake Travis that I was reminded of the page number where the anal sex scene happened. I had to go back and reread it, because I missed the scandal of words when I read it earlier this week.

I am 51 years old. I used to read Judy Blume, Sidney Sheldon, and Jackie Collins in the 1980s

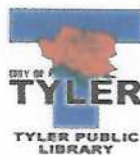
Page 39 was so innocuous that I read right over it.

I applaud your efforts to provide teens with the literature that they need to know that they are not alone

Thank you so much for sharing this!!!

ASHLEY! You are remarkable. As a Texan born and raised: thank you so much for writing this essay and sharing your voice in all the ways you do. What a difference you're making for kids and adults everywhere.

I'm a Texan, too, and I'm not giving up on Texas kids (or their right to read)



submitted
1/9/2023
to Library
Director
A. Heue

Tyler Public Library

Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Material

Thank you for bringing an item to our attention you feel may not have merit. The Collection Development Committee will examine the material in an attempt to be objective, but they need your help to determine specifically the objection. Your Help in this matter is appreciated. We hope you will continue to support the library in its efforts to bring a well-balanced and meaningful collection together for every citizen of Tyler.

Please complete the follow form. Your may use the back of the form if you require more space.

Author: Ashley Hope Perez

Title: Out of Darkness

Publisher: Carolrhodo, Lerner Publishing

Format: Hardcover ☒ Paperback ☐ Recording ☐ Other ☐

Request Initiated by: Jan Love

1) To what in the book do you object? Please be specific, citing pages:

SEE ATTACHED EXCERPTS FROM THIS BOOK.

These passages are not something that should be accessible to minors in the Tyler Public Library. Taxpayers in Tyler have a reasonable expectation that city employees will not knowingly place vulgar and sexually explicit books like this where minors can see them. The intent behind doing so does, in my opinion, show a disregard for the well-being of children.

2) What do you feel might be the result of allowing this book in the children's section?

Early exposure to pervasively vulgar and sexual content leads to early sexual activity, sadness in children. It also distorts young people's understanding of healthy relationships and addiction and NORMALIZES SEXUAL HARM. The graphic content is targeted towards females. This book includes graphic verbal descriptions of sexual abuse and **PEDOPHELIA**. Library patrons have a reasonable expectation that books placed in the children's section are appropriate for children like this in the children's section.

3) For what age group would you recommend this material be placed?

This book should be immediately reshelfed in the Adult section on the second floor.

OUT OF DARKNESS
VOTED TO MOVE
BY LIBRARY
BOARD
6/2023

4) Can you recommend anything good about this material?

I would never recommend it to a minor because it would be intentionally negligent of me to do so knowing what is in this book. The reason I am submitting these excerpts is *ensure the librarian and collections department are well aware* of what they are making accessible to minors. I would definitely recommend this book to the parents of a minor so they are aware of what is being purchased by the library and placed within easy access to their children.

5) Did you read, view or listen to this item in its entirety? Yes.

6) Are you aware of the reviews received by this material? The librarian will be happy to help find them.

Yes. I have read the Kirkus reviews and Printz Award reviews and a few other. Printz describes this 'award-winning' book as a 'bittersweet romance'. The Tyler Public Library describes it in a similar fashion, completely omitting the explicit, vulgar and graphic scenes of rape, masturbation and inappropriate sexual encounters. **I believe that these reviews are misleading and actually can encourage children to read this book, only to have them exposed to age-inappropriate content.** I have also read other online reviews that detail portions of the actual excerpts from the books. Finally, I read the book myself and can personally attest to the inappropriate content that should not knowingly be made accessible to minors.

Signature of Complainant _____

Address _____ Tyler Texas 75701 _____

Library Card Barcode # _____ 28957001996718 _____

Phone _____ 903-780-8353 _____

ACTUAL EXCERPT FROM PAGES OF THE BOOK OUT OF DARKNESS

Better was big enough to include Rosie Lynn Horton, who sang soprano in the choir and had slightly mismatched nipples on nutmeg brown breasts that were otherwise perfect.

MASTURBATION: She was there when Henry came into the bathroom and closed the door behind him. She watched as he placed both hands on the wall beneath the mirror and pressed his forehead against the glass. A moment later, one of his hands slid down into his pajamas. It was like some small creature was trying to escape from his throat. His hand moved fast. His body jiggled. He kept his forehead against the mirror and his eyes closed. Then he grunted once and seemed to shudder all over.

PEDOPHELIA: He took one of her hands in his and squeezed it. "Come on over here." He pulled her to her feet, close to him. He shifted in his pajamas, and the part of him that made him a man stuck out, reddish purple and frightening. She had never seen one before except on a baby. This was different. He lifted her hand to his mouth and licked it. Then he lowered her hand down and closed it around the hardness his hand moved hers. His left hand gripped her shoulder, pressing her head tight against the hard, flat plane of his stomach. She watched her hand move back and forth like it didn't belong to her. ...A moment later, the thing leaped. Henry's whole body shuddered, and a hot mess lay across her palm and between her fingers.

RAPE: "Look at me, son," he said to Beto. "Now I'm going to show you another side of what it means to be a man. What do you do with a field of your own? You plow it." He walked over to Naomi. "Lie down," he told her. "Don't do this, Henry." Naomi's lip trembled as she spoke. She dropped to her knees. ... "Lie back. Open your legs. Stop crying. Don't try to tell me this is the first time you've done this," Henry said. "Henry," she protested, "I haven't- I've never-" "You've lied enough already," he said. Then he pushed her back until her head was on the ground. "Beto, you come here. Watch. But don't try anything. I've got the gun right here." Beto looked long enough to see the revolver his father held near his sister's face. The shotgun lay on the far side of Naomi, out of reach. Beto did not watch. But he heard. Naomi's pleas. Wash's shouts. The sound of him pulling at the ropes. Henry's fist slamming into his sisters face once, twice, three times. Henry shouting, "You like that? Keep it up, boy! Every time you holler, I'm gonna punch her again." Wash's silence. The rustle of dry leaves. His father's rapid breathing. An agony of waiting. His sister crying out in pain. And then the end of it. Henry's shudder, grunt, and gasp. Naomi's sobbing. When Beto could look, Henry was standing up and zipping his pants with one hand. "I'll be damned, girl," he said, pushing his hair back off his brow. "You were telling the truth-" "Stop this!" Wash shouted, still straining at the ropes. "You haven't had enough yet, huh?" Henry said. "I'll be getting back to you in a minute." He scooped up the shotgun and jammed the revolver into his waistband. ...Henry paused when he was facing Naomi again. Blood oozed from her lips. He left eye was swollen closed. The front of her dress was damp and smeared with blood. There were swaths of red on her arms where he had held her down. She tried to cover herself with the torn fabric of her dress. ...Then Henry crossed to where Wash was. He hit Wash again and again. He kicked him. He pummeled and jabbed and slapped. If Naomi cried out, he hit Wash harder. He used the end of the shotgun like a baseball bat. He did not stop until the only thing holding Wash up was the rope that tied him to the tree. "I think that's enough for now," Henry said. "Robbie, go untie him. I want to see him on his knees." ...When Beto undid the last knot, Wash tumbled to the ground and fell on his face. "Here's your chance to redeem yourself," Henry said to Beto. "I'm going to give you this," he stretched out the hand that was holding the shotgun, "and I'm going to hold on to this." He pulled the revolver out of the waistband of his pants. Wash pushed himself up on all fours. He coughed up blood and something white. Teeth, Beto realized. Wash crawled slowly toward Naomi. "You remember what I showed you when we went out to the woods?" Henry pressed the butt of the gun into Beto's shoulder. "If you need more shots, remember to pump it. Go on now. Aim at him. He ain't moving fast." ... "Good boy," Henry said. "Now shoot him, or I'll shoot your sister." ... "I ain't playing, boy," Henry lifted the revolver and pointed it at Naomi. ...Henry took a step toward Naomi, the gun pointed at her. "One...two...three...I ain't counting

past seven, son." "Please," Naomi gurgled. "Please don't-" "Four...five...six..." A shot rang out. Wash moaned. Naomi's eyes widened in disbelief. Beto gasped at what he'd made happen. ...Henry stared down at the gun in his hand. He hadn't known until the moment he fired that he was capable of shooting a woman. Red seeped from Naomi's thigh. ..."Tell Robbie to kill the nigger," he said to her. ...Naomi could not move. She watched the sky over Wash's shoulder with the eye that was not swollen shut. It was the same view she'd seen when Henry held her down. She had wanted it to stop. The pain. She had thought, Henry is putting himself inside me. She had vomited a little, and bile had dribbled down the side of her mouth. ...they were far enough into their dream that neither of them heard the next shot. ...The patch of red on Naomi's chest matched the one on Wash's back.

Tyler Public Library
Book Reconsiderations/Responses/Documentation
"Round One"
Jan 2023

Title(s) Out of Darkness
Volunteer 4 love

- ☒ Email sent to Library *affene Jan 9, 2023*
- ☒ Copy of Book Form(s)
- ☒ Email Sent to elected officials
- ☐ Response from elected officials
- ☒ Response from Library *undated*
- ☐ Other Notes:

*Jan requested an appeal to the board
for 4/26 library board meeting -
meeting was cancelled
rescheduled for 6/21*

1/a - sent form to library